

## Committee Votes Unanimously to Block Medicaid Cuts

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### NEWS RELEASE

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

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### Committee Votes Unanimously to Block Medicaid Cuts

Approved bipartisan legislation would place a one-year moratorium on seven Administration-imposed Medicaid regulations

Washington, D.C. — The Committee on Energy and Commerce completed a markup today on legislation to place a temporary, one-year moratorium on seven Administration-imposed Medicaid regulations that would make significant cuts to the program over the next five years.

Committee Members unanimously approved H.R. 5613, the “Protecting the Medicaid Safety Net Act of 2008,” by a vote of 46 to 0.

Reps. John D. Dingell (D-MI ), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Tim Murphy (R-PA), introduced H.R. 5613 on March 13, 2008.

"In reporting this critical bill, Committee Members came together to protect the health of millions of Medicaid beneficiaries," said Dingell. "I'm sure the thousands of people who have sent letters supporting this bill will be glad to hear that it was unanimously approved. Not only does this legislation preserve critical health care programs and services, it also imposes safeguards against fraud and abuse. Though it's no surprise that HHS has expressed opposition to H.R. 5613, I encourage Administration leaders to take a careful look at what this legislation will accomplish. There is good reason this bill has received broad, bipartisan, unanimous support."

During the past year, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has issued a number of regulations that would reverse longstanding Medicaid policies and eliminate federal payments for a variety of critical Medicaid functions. The rules in question would affect: payments provided to public safety net institutions; coverage of rehabilitation services for people with disabilities; outreach and enrollment in schools as well as specialized medical transportation to school for children covered by Medicaid; graduate medical education payments; coverage of hospital clinic services; case management services that allow people with disabilities to remain in the community; state provider tax laws; and appeals filed through HHS.

"I commend the full committee for supporting legislation that protects Medicaid beneficiaries from an onslaught of harmful regulations issued by the Bush administration," said Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Health. "By passing this legislation, we are delaying regulations that undermine the longstanding partnership between the federal and state government that should not be implemented without considerable research on how they will impact millions of vulnerable Americans."

H.R. 5613 includes two offsets to ensure that the bill is fully paid for: the first extends an electronic asset verification demonstration for Medicaid applicants and beneficiaries; the second borrows funds from the Physician Assistance and Quality Improvement (PAQI) Fund in 2013 that will be replenished in 2014. The legislation also ensures that fraud and abuse safeguards are integrated into the electronic asset verification contracting process.

In his opening statement, Ranking Member Joe Barton (R-TX) expressed his support for the legislation saying, "This committee is once again showing that it can place policy ahead of politics and set a positive example for the rest of the Congress to follow...I will vote for final passage of the bill today and I would urge my colleagues on both sides to do the same."

More than two thousand organizations, including the National Governors Association, the American Hospital Association, Voices for America's Children, American Federation of Teachers, National Association of State Medicaid Directors, and the American Public Human Services Association, have written letters to HHS in opposition to the regulations. Additionally, numerous groups representing beneficiaries, particularly people with disabilities, have also publicly opposed these regulations.

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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